

6 Community Services

6.1 Parks and Recreation

6.1.1 Historical Perspective

The Carroll Manor Recreation Council (CMRC) was established in 1975. Through the efforts of volunteers the CMRC continues today. The CMRC community has always been strong in lacrosse, baseball, soccer, and basketball for youth.

6.1.2 Current Status

The CMRC headquarters is located at 3101 Paper Mill Road (formerly a US Army Nike Missile Base). An office is maintained there for the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks representative, and for use of the CMRC officers. This facility serves a multitude of recreation related activities, including the Jacksonville Senior Center, crafts, arts, and dog obedience classes. The facility will not be adequate for future needs. The inadequacies are addressed in Section 6.1.3 following.

Over the past five years, CMRC has experienced an explosive growth in the variety of programs offered. These include such activities as year-round soccer, field hockey, baseball, basketball, volleyball, girls' lacrosse, gymnastics, tumbling, aerobics, piano, arts, ladies softball, and square and line dancing. Many of the indoor programs are conducted at the Jacksonville Elementary School. Driving the increase in programs is a large growth in the area population in terms of young families with children of various ages. For example, the soccer program enrollment has doubled from 400 children in 1994 to over 800 children in 1997.

Programs are suffering for lack of fields and facilities. Also, several of the existing fields are substandard "practice" fields that are not capable of supporting actual games. Baseball is a particular problem that is compounded by adverse weather. Almost all games get backed up on the schedule; even worse, they are forced to be canceled off the schedule as there is no field available to play make-up games even in areas as far away as Owings Mills. In many instances, some children may only be involved in eight or nine games the entire season. A similar result occurred with the soccer program in the fall of 1997; inclement weather, coupled with the lack of appropriate playing fields, virtually destroyed the season.

The discussion above has focussed on activities and facilities primarily directed towards youth. Ignored throughout the years have been outdoor facilities and fields, beyond trails, which will also accommodate people of all ages in activities such as adult baseball, touch football, and soccer.

6.1.3 Future Requirements and Recommendations

1. According to the Department of Recreation and Parks, an additional 80± acres of parkland is required to meet the current need within the CMRC area.
2. Additional ball fields are needed to meet the existing recreation program demand.
3. An indoor facility suitable for aerobics, gymnastics, dance lessons, etc. is needed in addition to the Jacksonville and Carroll Manor elementary schools. This could be a combined facility used by both the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Aging (see Section 6.2).

4. Upgrading of the Carroll Manor Middle School Recreation Center site (also known as the Hydes Road Fields) is recommended and should include improved parking, baseball backstops, and a comfort station/storage building.
5. A detailed recreational supply-and-demand analysis should be conducted by the Department of Recreation and Parks to determine the specific needs for outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.
6. Within the County's fiscal capability; funding should be provided to correct existing parkland and recreation deficiencies and to satisfy future needs.

6.2 Jacksonville Senior Center

6.2.1 History

The Jacksonville Senior Center developed from its parent organization, the GALA Club, an acronym for the Golden Age Leisure Activities Club. The GALA Club was established on 25 April 1973 as a group of 29 interested persons organized by Rev. Partee Boliek and four other area Pastors. The first formal club meeting was held on 9 May 1973; thereafter the club met twice a month, on Wednesdays, at St. John's Lutheran of Sweet Air. Later, beginning in May 1974, the club met at Chestnut Grove Presbyterian Church annex on Jarrettsville Pike, a former church north of Jacksonville. It met at that site for 15 years. The purpose of the GALA Club was to stimulate interest in and to advise local senior citizens regarding specific programs and services available to them in this rural area. A further purpose was to work with the Baltimore County Department of Aging and other private and governmental agencies concerned with the needs of senior citizens.

In 1979, the membership of the GALA Club elected to join the Baltimore County Senior Center Program. On 28 September 1979, the GALA Club became the Jacksonville Senior Center. In July of 1988, the center was given a new home at the 2000 square foot Paper Mill Recreation Center, formerly a US Army Nike Missile Base, located at 3101 Paper Mill Road in Jacksonville.

6.2.2 Current Status

The mission of the Baltimore County Department of Aging is to develop and administer programs and activities that support Baltimore County senior citizens in their efforts to remain healthy, active, and independent members of the community, and to provide, coordinate, and advocate for services which ensure the highest quality of life for both active and health-impaired seniors, their families and care-givers. The Jacksonville Senior Center accomplishes this mission by providing numerous activities such as classes in various forms of art, woodworking, calligraphy, art appreciation, line and tap dancing, computer skills, ceramics, and quilt making. Members also make special items for residents of area nursing homes and hospitals, such as gingerbread villages, baby caps for new-borns, and ribbons for MADD. They also collect and distribute food for needy families, and provide financial support to disaster victims and to organizations such as the Oncology Center at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

The Jacksonville Senior Center also sponsors numerous seminars, travelogues, and special events such as health fairs, in conjunction with the local chapter of AARP and several North County hospitals. Additionally, the center provides a congenial social atmosphere for its membership by scheduling parties, lunches, entertainment, and trips to local points of interest throughout the year.

6.2.3 Future Expectations and Recommendations

Considering the active past and the current enthusiastic membership (120 members), one can expect the Jacksonville Senior Center to move forward with the times and possibly become a secondary senior center in the near future. According to the Baltimore County Department of Aging, a secondary center is one which is open five days per week, and one evening a week. It also offers many Department of Aging services, such as Eating Together, Senior Insurance Counseling, and a social worker.

In order to meet the basic requirement noted above in the mission statement, a new senior center is needed to replace the present center, which can no longer meet the needs of the senior community in this area. There is every indication that the local senior population will continue to increase with the increasing urbanization of this formerly agricultural area. The senior center is presently officially operating only on Mondays and Wednesdays in an outdated structure provided by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The planning for activities at the center for both seniors and recreation participants is seriously constrained by the lack of space, and scheduling conflicts are common. These conflicts have necessitated rescheduling Tap and Jazz dance classes for seniors to Fridays. These particular activities require large spaces and have conflicted with other scheduled dance, health, and financial planning seminars and activities of other groups using the facility. In addition, there is no adequate room to house a woodworking shop and computer lab, with the corresponding safety and security safeguards, and a small weight room. These facilities are urgently needed to meet the needs of local residents. At the present time blood pressure screenings, of primary importance in maintaining senior health, are conducted in the cramped kitchen area of the Center.

Parking at the facility is inadequate compared to the number of participants in the various activities. At certain popular events, members are unable to find vacant parking spaces.

In view of the fact that the present facility is shared with Recreation and Parks Department activities, two local AA chapters, a church group, a dog obedience class, a Civil War Historical Society group, and aerobics group, and is occasionally rented to members of the community for special events, it is clear that the time has come to plan for construction of a new center. It should have adequate space to accommodate the numerous activities cited above, a basic kitchen with a potable water supply, and offices for administration and staff.

ACTION SUMMARY:

1. Make the Jacksonville Senior Center a Secondary Center.
2. Replace the current building with one providing sufficient facilities for senior activities, including:
 - offices and meeting rooms;
 - easily-maintained kitchen;
 - potable water supply;
 - adequately-equipped computer room;
 - artist/crafts work area (painting, ceramics, quilting);
 - adequate parking;
 - hall with no support poles down the middle; and

- adequate storage room.
3. Provide an additional entrance to parking from Paper Mill Road.
 4. Design and build a center with sufficient capacity to serve the various groups needing such a building, not just seniors.

6.3 Volunteer Fire Company

6.3.1 Fire Company History

The Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Co., Inc. (JVFC), has enjoyed a long, rich and rewarding tradition of providing emergency services to the community of Jacksonville and vicinity. Several major fires in the area in the spring of 1953 prompted local citizens to meet and organize a fire company. At the time the closest protection came from Hereford to the north, Towson to the south, Long Green to the east and Cockeysville to the west, all many miles away. The first meeting was held at the Chestnut Grove Church on 5 March 1953 and was attended by 57 residents. The fire company was soon incorporated with 113 charter members. The company purchased its first fire engine, a 1929 American LaFrance, from the Cockeysville Volunteer Fire Company (Figure 7). This fire engine was placed in service and stored at what is now Priceless Hardware on Jarrettsville Pike. Eventually, land was obtained, a building constructed, and the permanent home of the company was officially dedicated on 5 December 1954. This location at 3500 Sweet Air Road is still the present site of the fire company.

The JVFC has enjoyed many accomplishments over its 45 years. The company was the first in the area to design and place in service a small unit specifically made for going off road and obtaining water from streams and ponds, and was the first volunteer ambulance company to obtain a mechanical CPR device known as a Thumper. JVFC was the first volunteer company outside the beltway to start a water rescue team with a boat (after Hurricane Agnes). A declining need for this service caused it to be discontinued in the 1980s. The JVFC volunteer ambulance was the first in the area to begin specialization in pediatric care. Using appropriate equipment and specialized training in local rescue efforts, many of the members have received local and national recognition for their unselfish service.

6.3.2 Current Status and Near-Term Upgrades

The company has recently completed a building addition and renovation. This new and enlarged facility allows it to efficiently operate and meet the ever-increasing demands of emergency services. The training of personnel, the community's first line of defense, is paramount. The demands on these volunteers continues to increase. The average member can easily amass over 200 hours annually just in training. Far above the basic skills of fire fighting and medical aid, the company continues to advance in required specialized training. New disciplines include dealing with hazardous materials, IV, cardiac and advanced trauma training, tactics and management, specialized rescue, and a myriad of classes never dreamed of years ago. The new station provides much-needed space and will allow for growth in the future. It houses 8 pieces of state-of-the-art equipment that are specifically meant to serve our rural area. The present main fire engine is shown in Figure 8.

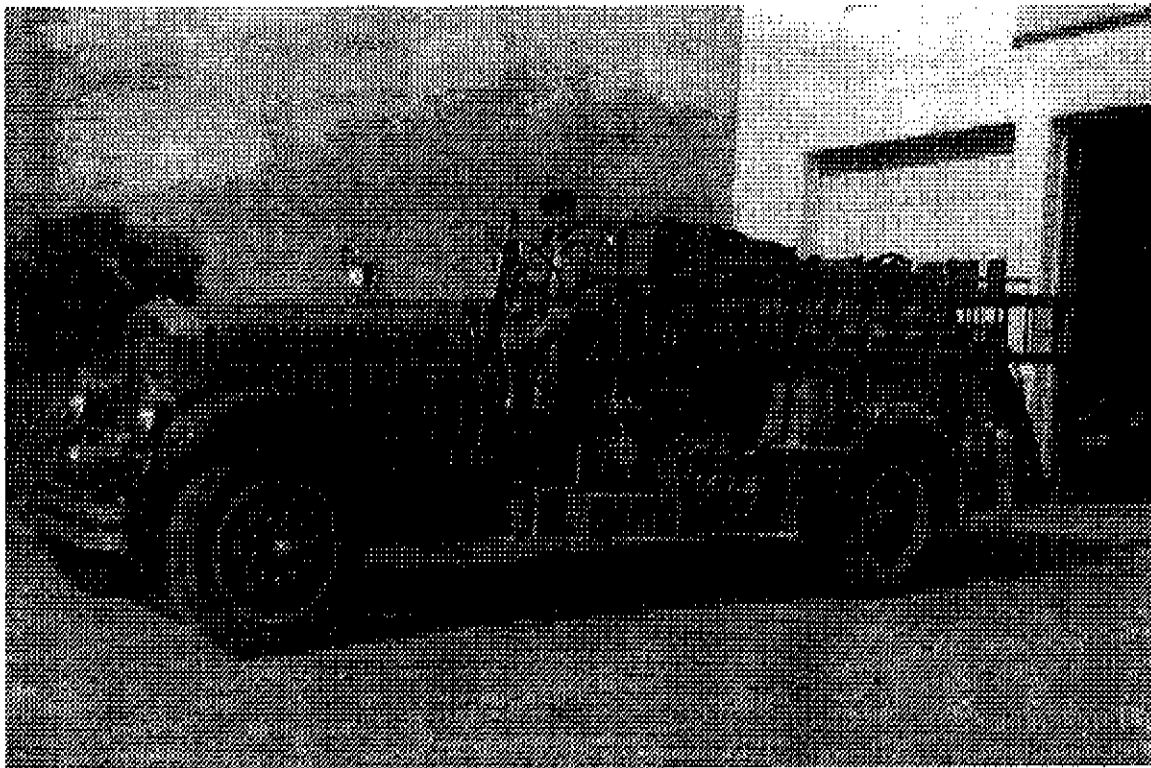


Figure 7: Jacksonville's first fire engine, a 1929 American LaFrance.

6.3.3 Long-Term Needs and Goals

There is an immediate need to specify requirements and advertise for bids for replacement of the 6-year-old medic unit. A new unit is expected to cost over \$100,000. Another immediate need is a public awareness campaign. Many people do not understand the workings of a volunteer fire company. A critical present and future need is for membership. The company must diligently recruit and retain members as it enters the next century. The demographics of the Greater Jacksonville area has left the company with an unusually high turnover in members. Young members leave as they start a search for their first home and career in other areas. This membership need is for both emergency service and administrative assistance. The emergency response load of the company has nearly doubled in the last ten years. The administrative aspect increases with additional paperwork, fund raising and the continued importance of educating the community's children in fire safety.

GOALS:

1. Replace the medic unit.
2. Maintain and increase volunteer participation. Publicize the need for additional volunteers for the various activities of the company.
3. Increase the level of contributions for basic operations, ambulance service and equipment, and the retirement of the fire house mortgage.



Figure 8: Jacksonville's newest fire engine.

6.4 Jacksonville Bookmobile

In the early 1980s, Baltimore County established a mini-library in Jacksonville. The library was properly staffed with two full-time employees and approximately 40 volunteers performing services at different times of the week. The facility was widely used by residents of the Greater Jacksonville community.

In February 1993, Baltimore County closed the Jacksonville Mini-Library along with seven others as a way to trim the County budget. The residents of the Greater Jacksonville community were very upset with this decision and have lobbied for the past six years for the return of the mini-library.

In 1997, the Greater Jacksonville Association Planning Committee and Baltimore County developed a formal plan for the return of a library facility to Jacksonville in the form of a reading center. This plan included provision of funding by the County of \$50,000 for the first year, and \$25,000 for each of the second and third years. Beyond that, the Jacksonville Reading Center would have to be supported solely within the community.

After extensive review by members of the GJA Planning Committee it was determined that there were serious problems involved in pursuing the reading center. Such a center is different from a mini-library in that the community controls the facility (rather than the county) and bears all risk from its operations. A reading center is independent of the Baltimore County Library system, so that individuals could not order or return books from other libraries within the County system.

Members of the GJA Planning Committee were unsuccessful in obtaining a long-term lease in the Rural Commercial Center that would allow the reading center to operate within its limited funding.

After the review of the Jacksonville Reading Center proposal, the GJA Planning Committee determined that the more practical approach would be to consider Baltimore County Library's suggestion that the funds granted by Baltimore County be applied towards a community bookmobile. The primary focus of the bookmobile would be to provide books suitable for elementary school children and popular adult titles, serving two key citizen groups: children and seniors. The bookmobile would also be stocked with large print best sellers and books on audio. Primary emphasis would be to provide a good selection of children's books that would enhance the local elementary school selections. Providing a bookmobile would provide seniors and children access to books without involving transportation to other areas. This would also assist families in which both parents work to overcome time availability constraints.

This is the first step in returning the Baltimore County Library system to Jacksonville. If the Jacksonville community uses the bookmobile extensively, the return of the Jacksonville mini-library should be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. As a temporary measure, establish a regularly scheduled bookmobile visit to Jacksonville.
2. In the long term, re-establish the Baltimore County Mini-Library in Jacksonville.

6.5 Jacksonville Business Association

As indicated in the owner-operator survey, there is a consensus that an association of Jacksonville business owner-operators should be established. This group would be a prime force to ensure that the provisions of this plan are supported and implemented.

6.6 New U.S. Postal Service Facility

The Jacksonville area is largely served by the Phoenix Post Office, which is located at 14320 Jarrettsville Pike. The existing post office is too small to meet the needs of the community and the operational requirements of the United States Postal Service. The Postal Service desires to build a new post office in Jacksonville. The new building would be approximately 12,000 square feet in size.

The Postal Service has identified a potentially viable site for the new post office. That site is on a largely undeveloped parcel of land known as the Klein Property, which is located on the west side of Jarrettsville Pike just north of the existing post office and the Paper Mill Village Shopping Center.

This Plan recommends that the Postal Service establish its new facility on the Klein Property provided that it is located and designed to prevent adverse impacts on the adjoining neighborhood of existing single-family homes immediately to the west. The Klein Property is a location that is convenient for local businesses and residents. Also, a new and expanded post office at this location will enhance Jacksonville's role as a rural center.